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SUBJECT: TURKEY/AFGHANISTAN: ELECTIONS, AFGHAN SPEAKER  
VISIT, TRILATERAL FORUM

REF: SECSTATE 108855

Classified By: POL Counselor Daniel O'Grady, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

TURKEY READY TO SUPPORT AFGHAN  
ELECTIONS, BUT NO FUNDING EARMARKED

¶1. (C) Turkey views upcoming Afghan elections as an important opportunity to strengthen Afghan national identity, MFA South Asia Section Head Emre Karagol told us October 17. President Gul and PM Erdogan underscored this point with Afghan National Assembly Speaker Kanuni during Kanuni's October 15-16 visit to Ankara. As the largest Muslim democracy in the region, with cultural and historical ties to Afghanistan, Turkey believes it can positively influence the election process as it believes it did in Pakistan, where it urged the opposition to engage. Gul and Erdogan reportedly offered to share with Afghanistan Turkey's electoral experience, but offered no specific pledges. Karagol took note of the significant U.S. commitment in support of the elections. Promising to convey our reftel points to his seniors, he said Turkey has not yet earmarked funds for Afghan election support, and he did not indicate it had plans to do so. He reminded us that only months ago, in Paris, Turkey boosted its financial support for Afghanistan with a fresh \$100 million pledge on top of the \$100 million it had earlier pledged in London.

KANUNI URGES MORE TURKISH  
SUPPORT FOR AFGHANISTAN

¶2. (C) Kanuni, who also met with Turkish Parliament Speaker Toptan while in Ankara, was enthusiastic about the upcoming elections, according to Karagol. The Turks were impressed by his intelligence and acumen, and believe he is influential in Kabul. Kanuni, according to Karagol, stressed Afghanistan's brotherly ties to the Turkish people, whom he called "brave and courageous," and asked for more technical and financial support, including more student exchanges. The General Dostum case, which has created some friction between Kabul and Ankara, was reportedly not discussed. Karagol had no new information to share on that issue, but observed that, without the criminal case against him dropped, Dostum would fear not being able to return to Afghanistan.

"ANKARA DECLARATION" TRILATERAL  
NOW PLANNED FOR NOVEMBER 17

¶3. (C) Prospective dates for the next Turkey/Pakistan/Afghanistan trilateral have slipped again, with Turkey now proposing November 17, in Istanbul. Neither side has yet confirmed. Afghan President Karzai had earlier

indicated to Turkey his intention to visit Istanbul for the World Economic Forum (WEF), October 30-November 1, but he is no longer planning to attend, said Karagol. Pakistani President Zardari is also not attending. Pakistani PM Gillani, however, will pay a bilateral visit to Ankara, October 28-29, before traveling to Istanbul October 30 for the WEF, departing October 31. Karagol said he believes the Afghans are more interested in the trilateral and in engaging Pakistan generally; Kanuni emphasized to the Turks the importance of Afghanistan-Pakistan dialogue and the value he said Afghanistan attaches to the trilateral forum hosted by Turkey.

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